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## Evergreen



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### Chapter 1 by Victoria Estevez

"Alice!!!, your cell phone has been ringing off the hook, I think you should get it" Larry said.  
"Fine, can you just answer for me" Alice said as she ran off the tennis court. Larry looked ashen as he was speaking into her phone "Its the police, they need to speak to you right now" Larry said. Alice became very worried.

"Hello?"

"Mam, this is Seargent Thomas from the Ft. Lauderdale police. There's been a terrible car accident, and you are listed as the emergency contact for Liz and Juan"

"Yes, yes I am they are staying here with me, she's my God Daughter"

"Um I think you should come to the hospital as soon as possible."

Alice hung up and ran out of the tennis court and to her house. "Michael!!!" Michael, her husband of 20 years, ran out to the living room sensing the panic in Alice's voice. "There's been a car Liz & Juan got into a car accident on the way down to the Keys, I need you to keep watching Joey and Racquel and don't let them know there's a problem yet. I don't know what's going on but it doesn't sound good" Michael was stunned.

"What doesn't sound good Alice?" Racquel, aged 14 overheard the conversation. "What's going on?" Alice couldn't avoid it now, she had to tell them. "Seems like your parents were in a car accident, they are in the hospital. I need you to keep watching Joey and Racquel and don't let them know there's a problem yet. I don't know what's going on but it doesn't sound good" Michael was stunned. "I don't know how I can help you, but I will do my best to help you. I don't want to drag you both down there and scare him since he's so young but it is probably best if we all

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go" Raquel began to tear, but soon composed herself, looking every bit like her mother and said "yes, we should I'll deal with Joey and keep him calm, you be you Alice and get those doctors in line. "

At the hospital they were ushered in right away and the head of the trauma dept came rushing over. "Alice Winter?" "Yes, I'm here" "Mam can we speak together in private" He gently grabbed her elbow and walked her away from the children. "I'm Dr. Chavez, head of trauma here. I have to tell you Liz & Juan were in a very serious accident, a 18 wheeler clipped them and they flipped several times. It's not good. Juan is already brain dead and Liz may not survive the night. I am so sorry and I see that's their children there" Alice heard what he said but it seemed like he was speaking through water. "Um, yes, yes. That's Raquel she's 14 and that's Joey he's 7. They don't have actual grandparents. Juan's family died years ago when they crossed the border and Raquel's mother died last May. I um, well, what's their condition? Can the kids see Liz, is she very banged up?" Alice said, slowly barely thinking. "Liz is on a breathing machine and probably can't hear you but if the kids want to see her they can. Juan I wouldn't recommend it for the kids, I will need you to identify his body however. If you can." Alice nodded and reached for Michael's hand. He had instinctively walked over, her ever-present support & shadow. How she could live without him she could never know.

Alice and Michael were the quintessential power couple. They married late at 38 & 42 respectively, they focused on their careers and they had a fabulous New York city life. Alice was a partner in an immigration rights firm and Michael was a lead engineer for an architectural firm. They had a two bedroom apartment in the upper west side, a doorman and had long ago planned a comfy retirement to Florida like all of their friends. Liz, was Alice's protege, she would fight for the rights of undocumented immigrants and go against big corporations who would take advantage of innocent workers. Alice & Liz were very close, Alice practically became Liz's second mother they shared holidays together and went on vacations together. Michael loved Liz too, and since the couple was childless, Alice would say "oh I have a daughter in Liz it was great, I got her as a certified-pre-made human, all the fun of a kid none of the diapers"

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soon after his birth and he too quickly fell in love with having surrogate parents in Alice & Michael. Juan & Liz loved them so much, they named them the guardians of their children. Something that would turn out to be an important decision.

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